

Federal Agency Name: US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 04

Funding Opportunity Title: FY10 Region 04 Wetland Program Development Grants

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals (RFP)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 66.461

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-REG04WPDG-2010

Dates: Hard copy proposals must be received by the Agency Contact (see Section IV APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION of this RFP) by **5:00 P.M. EDT on June 15, 2010**. Proposals submitted electronically through Grants.gov must be received by **11:59 P.M. EDT on June 15, 2010**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding. Questions about this RFP must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII AGENCY CONTACTS before June 1, 2010. Written responses to frequently asked questions will be posted on EPA's website at: www.epa.gov/region4/.

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final application(s) will be requested from the eligible applicants whose proposal(s) have been preliminarily recommended for award. The applicants will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application packages.

Note to Applicants: If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s) in your proposal to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in Section II.C CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS.

SUMMARY

Notice of Request for Proposals for Projects to be Funded from the Wetland Program Development Grants - Regional Allocation

(CFDA 66.461 - Wetland Program Development Grants)

Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs) provide eligible applicants an opportunity to conduct projects that promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to build or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs as described in Section I FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION, of this announcement. States, tribes, local government agencies, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia are eligible to apply under this announcement. Universities that are agencies of state government are eligible. Non-profit organizations are not eligible to compete under this RFP.

This document describes the grant selection and award process for eligible applicants interested in applying for WPDGs under this announcement. A list of previously funded proposals is posted at [EPA's Wetland Grant Database \(http://iaspub.epa.gov/pls/grts/f?p=101:1\)](http://iaspub.epa.gov/pls/grts/f?p=101:1) for reference.

Implementation of wetland protection programs is not an eligible activity under this announcement.

The total amount of federal funding available under this announcement is approximately \$2,300,000 depending on Agency funding levels, which may vary from year to year, and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that approximately 05 to 10 awards will be made under this announcement. Awards will likely range from \$100,000 to \$600,000 in federal funds.

All applicants must describe in their proposal how they will contribute the required minimum cost share/matching funds.

Important Dates:

- 06/15/2010 Proposals must be received electronically through Grants.gov by **11:59 P.M. EDT** or in hard copy by **05:00 PM EDT**.
- 07/01/2010 EPA tentatively selects proposals for awards. Successful applicants will be requested to submit full grant applications and workplans for selected projects to be funded.
- 10/01/2010 EPA awards grants to recipients.

The dates above (other than the June 15, 2010 proposal submission date) are anticipated dates and may be subject to change. See Section IV for further information on submission methods and dates.

Late proposals will not be considered.

Contents of this Request for Proposals:

I.	Funding Opportunity Description	p 03
II.	Award Information	p. 07
III.	Eligibility Information	p. 09
IV.	Application and Submission Information	p. 12
V.	Application Review Information	p. 21
VI.	Award Administration Information	p. 23
VII.	Agency Contacts	p. 25
VIII.	Other Information	p. 25

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 04

Funding Opportunity Title: Region 04 Wetland Program Development Grants

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals (RFP)

Catalog of Domestic Assistance Number: 66.461

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-REG04WPDG-2010

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The goals of EPA's wetland program include increasing the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition. In pursuing these goals, EPA seeks to build the capacity of all levels of government to develop and refine effective, comprehensive programs for wetland protection and management.

WPDGs provide states, tribes, local governments, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia (hereafter referred to as applicants or recipients) an opportunity to carry out projects to develop and refine comprehensive wetland programs.

The statutory authority for WPDGs is Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 USC §1254(b)(3). Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA restricts the use of these assistance agreements to improving wetland programs by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Projects that are demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches. EPA expects that the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project.

Wetland mapping as part of a project to build a state/tribal/local government program to research, investigate, experiment, train, demonstrate, survey, and study the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution will be eligible for funding. For example, eligible applicants can form "Wetland Mapping Coalitions" to help co-fund regional (two or more states and/or tribes) mapping efforts that would otherwise be too costly for any one group to undertake.

A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement. Funds received through the WPDG competition cannot be used to fund proposal tasks to implement a wetland program, for fundraising, honorarium, or to fund the purchase of land or conservation easements. Proposal tasks that are or might be required by a previous or pending permit or regulatory activity, e.g., CWA Section 404 permit, CWA Section 402 permit,

CWA Section 401 certification, or federal, state, tribal, or local government regulatory requirement(s) are not eligible for funding because they are implementation tasks. Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding Inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands is considered implementation and is not eligible for funding.

Purchase of vehicles (including boats, motor homes) and office furniture is not eligible for funding under this program. The lease of vehicles is eligible for funding under this program but must be described in the budget detail.

Proposed projects must comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance. Under the competition, each proposed project must be able to be completed within the project period.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The WPDG program supports EPA's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 4: Healthy Communities, Objective 4.3: Restore and Protect Ecosystems, Sub-Objective 4.3.1: Increase Wetlands of the EPA Strategic Plan (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>).

Goal 4: Healthy Communities and Ecosystems -- Protect, sustain or restore the health of people, communities, and ecosystems using integrated and comprehensive approaches and partnerships

- ❖ Objective 4.3: Restore and Protect Ecosystems -- Protect, sustain, and restore the health of critical natural habitats and ecosystems
 - Sub-objective 4.3.1: Increase Wetlands: By 2011, working with partners, achieve a net increase in wetland acres with additional focus on assessment of wetland condition.

All proposed projects must demonstrate the linkage to the Strategic Plan and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs, and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goal of restoring and protecting ecosystems. Additional information regarding EPA's Strategic Plan and discussion of environmental results can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700.7.pdf>.

Outputs (deliverables/products) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of anticipated outputs from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Development of training materials and tools to help local decision-makers integrate wetland protection into watershed planning;
- Development of protocols and assessment criteria that can be used to identify wetland restoration and protection priorities;
- Development of monitoring protocols and assessment criteria that can be used to report the ambient condition of wetland resources; and
- Development of methods or strategies to incorporate wetland water quality standards into EPA approved state/tribal water quality standards.

- Development of methods or techniques to improve permit review; mitigation, restoration of waters of US, BMPs and improvement of Water Quality associated with Surface Mining activities.

Outcomes (objectives/goals) are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes are used as a way to gauge a project's performance. **Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature.** For instance, there is great need to improve the knowledge and decision-making ability, with respect to environmental issues, of local and state officials who are in the position of creating laws, ordinances, permits, etc. In this context, certain efforts designed to improve decision-making and behavioral changes can be viewed as environmental outcomes (results) if the grantee can show or measure the improvement in the knowledge of decision-makers who are in the position to create environmental institutional changes that are necessary to restore or protect the environment. In such instances, outcomes are not measured typically by environmental or water quality indicators, but rather by the institutional indicators that lead to the adoption and application of laws and regulations and the active management of programs necessary to provide environmental protection.

Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

Examples of anticipated outcomes from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Increased understanding of a wetland's condition;
- Improved wetland protection efforts;
- Increased understanding of how to ensure "no net loss" in quality and quantity of wetlands in the CWA 404 regulatory program;
- Increased quantity of wetlands;
- Increased quality of wetlands; and
- Improved water quality restoration and mitigation associated with surface mining operations.

As part of the proposal narrative, applicants must describe how the project will result in the protection of wetland resources and link the anticipated outputs and outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. Further information is located in Section IV.C., CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION of this RFP.

C. PRIORITY AREAS

1. National Priority Area: Wetland Program Development and Project Need

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to build or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs. Comprehensive wetland programs help enable state/tribes/local governments to more effectively protect, restore, and manage their wetland resources.

Experience with many states and tribes have distilled a set of core elements, actions, and activities that together comprise a comprehensive wetland program. EPA has summarized these common core elements, actions, and activities in the *Core Elements of an Effective State and Tribal Wetlands Program Framework*, also called the *Core Elements Framework* (CEF). The

CEF describes in greater detail each of the four core elements that make up an effective state/tribal wetland program. These four core elements are:

- Monitoring and assessment;
- Voluntary restoration and protection;
- Regulatory approaches including CWA 401 certification; and
- Wetland-specific water quality standards.

Each of these four core elements is comprised of several broad “actions” that if collectively carried out would complete that core element. In addition, each action is made up of several more specific “activities,” which are the actual steps a state/tribal/local government could carry out to achieve each action. The four core elements, the set of development or refinement activities and the specific actions under the four core elements that are eligible under this RFP are listed at www.epa.gov/cefddevelop/ and located as an appendix to this RFP.

All proposals submitted under this RFP must be for projects that build or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs. Accordingly, applicants must demonstrate in their proposal how the proposed project will build or refine a state/tribal/local government wetland program by indicating which core element(s) from the appendix their proposal is building or refining and by referencing one or more of the actions under a core element(s) in the attached appendix that they will undertake as part of the proposed project.

EPA recognizes that program development will continue to be incremental and bounded by the goals and resources within a state or tribe; the Agency does not expect simultaneous development of all core elements by every state, tribe, and local government.

2. Regional Priority Area(s)

Regional priority areas include:

Under the June 11, 2009 Memorandum of Understanding signed by EPA, U. S Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Interior, EPA has been directed to improve the implementation of the NPDES and Section 401 programs by providing support to the state programs in order to improve environmental protection and reduce the harmful effects of surface coal mining operations. The MOU specifically directs EPA to improve and strengthen oversight and review of water pollution permits for discharges from valley fills under Section 402 and state water quality certification under Section 401, by taking appropriate steps to assist the States to strengthen state regulations, enforcement, and permitting of surface mining operation under these programs.

This includes the following:

1. Projects that improve permit review for surface mining operations;
2. Projects that include the development of BMPs for surface mining operations; and
3. Mining techniques to improve water quality associated with surface mining operations.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING

EPA anticipates approximately \$2,300,000 in federal funding to be available for assistance agreements under this announcement to fund approximately 05 to 10 awards. Awards for the selected projects will likely range from \$100,000 to \$600,000 in federal funding. EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost (see Section III.B., COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS for information on minimum non-federal cost share/match requirement.)

It is anticipated that the assistance agreements awarded under this announcement will have one to three year project periods. The project period for assistance agreements under this announcement should be no more than six years.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity to the competition and selection process.

EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement, or make fewer awards than anticipated. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

B. TYPE OF FUNDING

It is anticipated that grants and cooperative agreements may be funded under this announcement. When cooperative agreements are awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project workplans and budget. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial Federal involvement for projects selected may include: close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 40 CFR 31.36(g), review of proposed procurements; approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient); review and comment on content of publications (printed or electronic) prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

C. CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS

1. Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards, acquire contract services, or fund partnerships?

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the

procurement provisions of the regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133 , and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

2. How will an applicant's proposed subawardees/subgrantees and contractors be considered during the evaluation process described in Section V APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION of the announcement?

Section V APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, as appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

- (i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal that if it receives an award that the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for-profit firms or individual consultants.
- (ii) an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

States, tribes, local government agencies, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia are eligible to apply for WPDGs. Past recipients of WPDGs include but are not limited to: wetland regulatory agencies, water quality agencies, planning offices, wild and scenic rivers agencies, departments of transportation, fish and wildlife or natural resources agencies, agriculture departments, forestry agencies, coastal zone management agencies, park and recreation agencies, non-point source or storm water agencies, city or county, and other state/tribal/local government agencies that conduct wetland-related activities.

Tribes must be federally recognized, although “Treatment as a State” status is not a requirement.

Intertribal consortia must meet the requirements of 40 CFR 35.504 (<http://www.epa.gov/lawsregs/search/40cfr.html>). This section states that an intertribal consortium is eligible to receive grants only if the consortium demonstrates that all members of the consortium meet the eligibility requirements for the grant and authorize the consortium to apply for and receive assistance. An intertribal consortium must submit to EPA adequate documentation of: (1) the existence of the partnership between Indian tribal governments, and (2) authorization of the consortium by all its members to apply for and receive the grant(s) for which the consortium has applied.

The term “interstate agency” is defined in CWA Section 502 as “an agency of two or more states established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more states, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator.” (Administrator refers to the head of EPA.)

Universities that are agencies of a state government are eligible. Universities that are not chartered as a part of state government are not eligible. Universities must include documentation demonstrating that they are chartered as a part of state government in their proposal. Documentation may include such things as: state constitution, university charter, or case law that has confirmed the university as a state agency.

Non-profit organizations are not eligible to compete under this RFP.

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

All applicants, except as noted below, must describe in their proposal submission how they will contribute a minimum of 25 percent of the total project cost *in cost share/matching funds in accordance with 40 CFR 31.24, 35.385, and 35.615.* The cost share/match must be for allowable costs and may be provided by the applicant or partner organization or institution. The cost share/match may be provided in cash or by in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. If the cost share/match is provided by a partner organization, the applicant is still responsible for proper accountability and documentation. A partner organization’s indirect cost/fringe cannot be used as cost share/match. Please note that an applicant’s indirect cost/fringe can be used as cost share/match.) Other federal grants may not be used as cost share/ match without specific statutory authority. All grant funds are subject to federal audit.

The total project cost is the sum of the total requested federal share and applicant cost share/match. The minimum cost share/match is determined by dividing the total project cost by four as illustrated by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total Project Cost (\$)}}{4} = \text{minimum cost share/match (\$)}$$

For example, if the **total project cost** (sum of federal and non-federal funds) is \$100,000 the applicant must be able to provide \$25,000 in cash or in-kind contributions as cost share/match.

OR

$$\frac{\text{Total Federal Funds Requested (\$)}}{3} = \text{minimum cost share/match (\$)}$$

For example, if the **total federal funds requested** are \$75,000 the applicant must be able to provide \$25,000 in cash or in-kind contributions as cost share/match.

If a tribe or intertribal consortium includes its WPDG in an approved Performance Partnership Grant (PPG), the cost share/match requirement may be reduced to 5 percent of the allowable cost of the work plan budget for the first two years in which the tribe or intertribal consortium receives a PPG. After two years, the cost share/match may be increased up to 10 percent of the work plan budget (as determined by the Regional Administrator). See Section III.D, PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP GRANTS for additional information. Currently the Agency is finalizing a process to determine the percent cost share/match for tribes and intertribal consortia after the two-year initial grant period (see regulations at 40 CFR Part 35.536(c)).

For example, if the **total project cost** for tribal/intertribal consortium in a PPG is \$100,000 the tribe/intertribal consortium must be able to provide a \$5,000 in-cash or in-kind contribution as cost share/match for the first two years with a 5 percent minimum cost share/ match requirement.

$$\frac{\text{Total Project Cost (\$)}}{20} = \text{minimum 5\% tribal PPG cost share/match (\$)}$$

Where the stated purpose is to include a WPDG in a PPG, a tribe or intertribal consortium may prepare a budget and proposed work plan based upon the assumption that EPA will approve the waiver amount for PPGs under 40 CFR 35.536. If the tribe or intertribal consortium does not or cannot include the WPDG as part of an approved PPG, or chooses to withdraw the WPDG from their PPG, the tribe or intertribal consortium must then meet the 25 percent cost share/match requirements identified above and, as applicable, negotiate a revised workplan with the EPA contact identified in Section VII., AGENCY CONTACTS.

Please contact the EPA Regional grant contact person listed in Section VII., AGENCY CONTACTS of this RFP if you have any questions about calculating cost share/match.

All applicants must describe in their proposal submission how they will contribute the appropriate *cost share/match* requirement. If an applicant cannot meet the appropriate cost share/match by the time of award, they will not be eligible to receive funding.

C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

These are requirements that if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V., APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION, of the announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III. A., ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS of this announcement.
2. Projects must be performed within one or more of the states of EPA Region 04 specifically Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee to be eligible to apply for funding. Inter-jurisdictional watershed projects must primarily be implemented in EPA Region 04. Applicants need not be located within the boundaries of the EPA Region to be eligible to apply for funding so long as the project will be performed within the geographic boundaries of the Region.
3. Proposals must **substantially** comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV, APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION, of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. If a single spaced proposal narrative is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 16 page double spaced page limit for the proposal narrative specified in Section IV.C.3. (Section IV.C.3 establishes a 16 page double spaced proposal narrative page limit which would be the equivalent of 8 single spaced pages; any single spaced pages in excess of 8 will not be reviewed).
4. All proposals submitted under this RFP must be for projects that build or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs. Accordingly, applicant's proposals must indicate which core element(s) (listed in the appendix) their proposal is building or refining and reference one or more of the actions under a core element (in the attached appendix) that they will undertake as part of the proposed project.
5. Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not a demonstration and all or parts of the proposal will be eliminated from consideration.
6. Funds cannot be used for project or parts of projects to implement a wetland program, for fund-raising, honorarium, or for the purchase of land or conservation easements.
7. Purchase of vehicles (including boats, motor homes) and office furniture is not eligible for funding under this program. The lease of vehicles is eligible for funding under this program but must be described in the budget detail.
8. If a proposal is submitted that has ineligible tasks, that portion of the proposal will be ineligible for funding and may render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.
9. Proposals must be received by the EPA or through www.grants.gov, as specified in Section IV of this announcement, on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV. Proposals received after the submission deadline will be

considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems attributable to grants.gov and not the applicant. For hard copy submissions, where Section IV requires proposal receipt by a specific person/office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Morgan Jackson of EPA, Region 04 as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed. Hard copy proposals must be submitted by overnight delivery, hand delivery, or courier service to the Regional EPA contact identified in Section VII., **AGENCY CONTACTS**. Proposals that are submitted via FAX or e-mail will not be considered.

D. PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Funds for a WPDG may be included in a PPG. A PPG enables entities to combine funds from more than one environmental program grant into a single grant with a single budget. Under this competition, states and interstate agencies proposals must first be selected under the competitive grant process described in this RFP and, in accordance with 40 CFR 35.138, the workplan commitments that would have been included in the WPDG workplan must be included in the PPG workplan. Similarly, tribal and intertribal consortia proposals must first be selected under this competitive grant process in accordance with 40 CFR 35.535. If a proposed PPG work plan differs significantly from the WPDG work plan approved for funding under this competition, the Regional Administrator must consult the National Program Office (see 40 CFR 35.535). The purpose of this consultation requirement is to address the issue of ensuring that a project which is awarded WPDG funding under this competition is implemented once commingled with other grant programs in a PPG. For further information, see the final rules on Environmental Program Grants for state and interstate agencies at 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A and tribes and intertribal consortia at 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart B. The rules are also available on EPA's website at: <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-TOX/2001/January/Day-09/t218.htm> (state) and <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-GENERAL/2001/January/Day-16/g219.htm> (tribal).

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGES

Grant application forms, including Standard Forms SF 424 and SF 424A, are available at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm and by mail upon request by calling the Grants and Interagency Management Division at (202) 564-5320.

B. FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants have the option to submit their proposals in *one* of two ways: 1) electronically via www.grants.gov or 2) hard copy and CD by overnight delivery, hand delivery, or courier service to the Regional EPA contact identified in Section VII., **AGENCY CONTACTS**. Proposals that are submitted via FAX or e-mail will not be considered. All proposals must be prepared, and include the information, as described in Section IV.C, **CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**, regardless of mode of submission.

1. Electronic Submission

Applicants who wish to submit their materials electronically through the Grants.gov web site may do so. Grants.gov allows an applicant to download a proposal package template and complete the package offline based on agency instructions. After an applicant completes the required proposal package, it can submit the package electronically to Grants.gov, which transmits the package to

the funding agency. Pictures and/or maps will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the proposal package.

If you wish to apply electronically via Grants.gov, the electronic submission of your proposal package must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Get Registered” on the left side of the page. *Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete.* If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the proposal process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Apply for Grants” tab on the left side of the page. Then click on “Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package” to download the compatible Adobe viewer and obtain the application package. **To apply through grants.gov you must use Adobe Reader applications and download the compatible Adobe Reader version (Adobe Reader applications are available to download for free on the Grants.gov website. For more information on Adobe Reader please visit the Help section on grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/program_status.jsp).**

You may retrieve the application package and instructions by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-REG04WPDG-2010, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.416), in the applicable field. Then complete and submit the proposal package as indicated. You may also be able to access the proposal package by clicking on the Application button at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Find Grant Opportunities” button on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

Application Submission Deadline

Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete proposal electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than **11:59 P.M. EDT June 15, 2010.**

Please submit *all* of the proposal materials described below. To view the full funding announcement, go to www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines/ or go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Find Grant Opportunities” on the left side of the page and then click on Search Opportunities/Browse by Agency and select Environmental Protection Agency. Proposal materials submitted through Grants.gov will be time/date stamped.

How to submit your proposal through Grants.gov

Applicants are required to submit the following documents to apply electronically through Grants.gov. All documents should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

- For the Proposal Narrative portion, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare this as described in Section IV.C, CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION, of the announcement and save the document to your computer as an MS Word or PDF file. When you are ready to attach it to the proposal package, click on “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File,”

and then attach it (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename,” the filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there are other attachments that you would like to submit to accompany your proposal narrative (such as letters of support from partners or annotated resumes), you may click “add Optional Project Narrative File” and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click “Close Form.” When you return to the “Grant Application Package” page, select the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List.” The form should now appear in the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

- The following 2 additional documents should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.
 1. SF 424 – Application for Federal Assistance
 2. SF 424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
- For each document, click on the appropriate form and then click “Open Form” below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click “Save.” When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, “Move Form to Submission List.” This action moves the document over to the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the “Completed Documents for Submission” boxes, click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary.

Please use the following format when saving your file: “Applicant Name – FY10 – “Reg04 WPDG Proposal” – 1st Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to “Applicant Name – “Reg04 WPDG Proposal” – 2nd Submission.” Once your proposal has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the proposal package through Grants.gov.

From the “Grant Application Package” page, your AOR may submit the proposal package by clicking the “Submit” button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the proposal package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>. If you have any other technical difficulties while applying electronically, please refer to <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>. Alternatively, please contact Morgan Jackson if you are having difficulties.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (*not from Grants.gov*) within 30 days of the proposal deadline, please contact Morgan Jackson as indicated in the paragraph above. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

2. Hard Copy and Compact Disc (CD) Submission

Two hard copies of the complete proposal package as described in Section IV.C, CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION, **and** an electronic version on a CD, are required. Please mark all submissions: **ATTN: FY10 Region 04 WPDG Proposal**. The CD may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc). Letters of support, pictures and/or maps will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the CD. Pictures and/or maps may be included as separate files using .jpg or .tif format.

Hard copy proposals with CD must be submitted by overnight delivery, hand delivery, or courier service to the Regional EPA contact identified in Section VII., **AGENCY CONTACTS**, and listed below.

Proposals that are submitted via FAX or e-mail will not be considered.

The address for hard copy submission is:

US EPA, Region 4
Attn: Morgan Jackson
61 Forsyth Street
AFC/15th Floor
Atlanta, GA 30303

C. CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applicants should read the following section very carefully and address all requirements.

All proposal packages, regardless of how submitted, must include the following three documents:

1. Signed Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance

Complete the form. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and e-mail address in Block 5 of the SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by visiting the web site at www.dnb.com.

2. Standard Form (SF) 424A, Budget Information

Complete the form. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF 424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the total indirect amount should also be indicated on line 22.

3. Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative must be no more than sixteen (16) double-spaced 8.5 x 11 inch pages (a page is one side of paper). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an

appropriate font for use in the proposal narrative. Additional pages beyond the 16 page limit will not be considered. If a single spaced proposal is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 16 page double spaced page limit for proposals (eight (8) single-spaced pages is the equivalent of the 16-page double-spaced proposal narrative page limit; any single-spaced pages in excess of 8 will not be reviewed). Supporting materials (such as support letters from partners and annotated resumes) are not included in the page limit for the proposal narrative.

The proposal narrative must be typewritten and include the information listed below in items 1-5.. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal narrative.

1. Cover Page (included in the page count) including:
 - a. Project Title (the project title should reflect the main project outcome/objective and should be 15 words or less);
 - b. Indicate the core element(s) from the attached appendix, discussed in Section I.C., PRIORITY AREAS, that are addressed in this proposal;
 - c. Indicate the action(s) from the attached appendix that apply to a core element that are addressed in this proposal;
 - d. Indicate the Regional priority(ies), discussed in Section I.C., PRIORITY AREAS, that are addressed in the proposal;
 - e. Name of Applicant;
 - f. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number);
 - g. Geographic Location (multi-state or tribal, state or tribe-wide, county name, Hydrologic Unit Code level (HUC) and name of the watershed, or other appropriate location within which the project occurs);
 - h. Total project cost and federal dollars requested; and
 - g. Abstract/project summary. The abstract should begin with one or two sentences describing the main objective of the proposal. It should also include a listing of the main tasks to be accomplished, and a description of the final product(s). The entire abstract should be 250 words or less.
2. Project description containing:
 - a. National Priority Area: Wetland Program Development and Project Need – Describe one or more actions found in the attached appendix under a core element that the applicant will undertake as part of the proposed project. Describe the need for the project and the benefit expected to be achieved by it. Include a statement that all are outside the scope of existing regulatory requirements.
 - b. Regional Priority Areas - Describe the Regional Priority Areas, identified in Section I.C., PRIORITY AREAS of this announcement, that this project will address, how the project would do so, and how it is consistent with and complements the core element(s) listed in the appendix to be addressed by the proposed project.
 - c. Outputs, Outcomes, and Results
 - i. Outputs (project products)- List the outputs expected to be produced through the completion of the proposed project (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.B., ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN of this announcement);

- ii. Outcomes (project objectives) - List the outcomes of the project to be accomplished as a result of the project outputs. (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.B., ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN of this announcement);
 - iii. Link to EPA Strategic Plan - Describe how project products (outputs) and objectives (outcomes) relate to the EPA Strategic Plan Goal of achieving a net increase in wetland acres with a focus on assessment of wetland condition. (see Section I.B., ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN of this announcement);
 - iv. Tracking Outputs and Outcomes - Describe your approach for measuring and tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) and project outcome(s).
- d. Description of Project – Provide a clear description of the approach to be used to produce the project’s products (outputs) and objectives (outcomes). If development of a methodology is part of the proposed project, then describe the planned development steps.
- e. Project Tasks - Outline the steps you will take to meet the project objective(s). Describe the projects tasks or components and the anticipated products associated with each task. Include a description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant.
- f. Partnership Information - Describe the agencies/organizations who will partner with the applicant to successfully conduct the project. Include a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project’s components/tasks. Describe how these partnerships will contribute to building or refining a state/tribe/local government wetland program. Where a state/tribal wetland program is split among more than one agency, EPA encourages partnerships between these agencies as appropriate. You may attach optional letters of support, from intended partners, to the end of your proposal. Letters of support are not counted in the page limit for the proposal narrative.
- g. Milestone Schedule - Provide a milestone schedule that covers the entire grant period. Include a breakout of the project tasks into phases with associated tasks and products. Include the anticipated dates for the start and completion of each task.
- h. Detailed Budget Narrative – Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. Identify the requested federal dollars, the cost share/match and the total project cost for each project task. Provide a description of proposed cost for each of the budget categories found in Form SF 424A (i.e., personnel, travel, contractual, other). Identify funding by budget category for each year of funding request.

Explain if and how non-federal partners will contribute to the required cost share/match. Attach optional letters of support from intended cost share/match partners, to your proposal. Letters of support are not counted in the page limit for the proposal narrative and should be submitted on applicable letterhead. Describe cost-effectiveness, reasonableness of costs, and value of in-kind

contributions. Include travel for applicant staff to attend wetland meetings throughout the proposed project period that are related in scope to the proposal.

While contractual and subgrant efforts may be part of an applicant's proposal, each WPDG recipient must be significantly involved in the administration of the award. EPA recommends that recipients use no more than 50 percent of the grant funds (federal funds plus non-federal cost share/match funds) to contract or subgrant to any other entity. However, if the applicant needs to exceed the recommended limit, the applicant should submit a written description of the need for greater contractual or subgrant support. EPA will evaluate the need for greater contractual or subgrant participation as part of the proposal. Note that any proposed subgrants should be included in the "other" cost category of the SF 424A.

When formulating budgets for proposals, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under the agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the project.

- i. Restoration Demonstration Project Information - If you are proposing a restoration demonstration project, describe the current environmental condition of the project site and the reason for restoration. Describe your post-installation monitoring program, and whether it will be funded as a part of this project or with another named funding source. If another funding source would be used, explain how you are confident that this work will be funded. Describe the regulatory authorities that you must comply with (e.g. CWA Section 404 permits, any applicable state and local permits). You may need to comply with regulations in order to conduct, monitor, and/or maintain a proposed restoration demonstration project. If you are not proposing this type of project, do not provide any description for item "i".
- j. Programmatic Capability/ Technical Experience/ Qualifications – Provide a brief description of the applicant's organizational experience related to the proposed project, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project. Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe the expertise/qualifications and knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Annotated resumes of applicant's key staff are encouraged. The annotated resumes should be no more than two pages per person and

should be attached at the end of the proposal narrative, and are not included in the page limit for the proposal narrative.

- k. Transfer of Results – Describe how the applicant will actively share the project methods, results and/or products with others so that they can better build their wetland protection programs. Describe whom the applicant plans to share the information with, either within or beyond their own organization, state or tribe, or region.
3. Past Performance - Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe: (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements, (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports and (iii) how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements--if you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V., APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior Federal agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or environmental results reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V., APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION. Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in your proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for these factors.
4. Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) - If you plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how you will comply with the Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements (see Section VIII.A., QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC) and STORET of this announcement for additional information). For example, do you plan to provide a QA Project Plan for EPA to review?
5. Invasive Species Control - What will you do to ensure that your project does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species? Explain how you would respond if an invasive species problem occurs in relation to your project. (See Section VIII.D., INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL of this announcement for further information).
6. Optional Attachments are not included in the page limit for the proposal narrative and include the following:
 - a. Pictures and Maps: Pictures and/or maps may be attached to describe the project.

- b. Staff Resumes: Staff resumes may be attached to describe the experience of relevant applicant staff and should not be more than approximately two pages per person (see item 2.j. Staffing Information, above, in the proposal narrative outline).
- c. Support Letters: Support letters should be attached to verify:
 - partners support of the project;
 - cost share/match or other resources provided by partners; and/or
 - how partners will make use of the projects results.

Partners who will be providing cost share/match should describe the resources (in-kind services or dollars) that they are committing to the project (see items 2.f., Partnership Information, and 2.h., Budget Narrative in the Project Description Section, above). A partner's indirect costs or fringe benefits cannot be used as cost share/match. All letters should be on the official letterhead of the supporting agency or organization.

NOTE: The applicant should also provide in its proposal narrative any additional information, to the extent not already identified above, that addresses the selection criteria found in Section V., APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Proposal submissions sent by hard copy with CD must be **received** by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII., AGENCY CONTACTS by **05:00 P.M. EDT on June 15, 2010**. Proposals submitted electronically through Grants.gov must be received by **11:59 P.M. EDT on June 15, 2010**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her state for more information on the process the state requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the state has selected the program for review. Further information regarding this can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

F. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application/proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions of applications/proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure. However, the agency considers competitive proposals confidential and protected from disclosure prior to the completion of the competitive selection process.

Note that under Public Law No. 105-277, data produced under an award is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

G. PROPOSAL COMMUNICATIONS

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy of January 11, 2005 (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals. However, consistent with the provisions of the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail to the Agency Contact identified in Section VII. Questions will be responded to and returned via email.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

Only those proposals that meet the threshold eligibility criteria found in Section III will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights listed below (100-point scale). Applicants need to address these criteria in their proposal submittal. Points will be awarded based on how well each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the proposal submittal.

1) National Priority Area: Wetland Program Development and Project Need (15 points)	<p>A. Under this subcriterion, proposals will be evaluated based on how well the proposal demonstrates the need for the project (5 points)</p> <p>B. Under this subcriterion, proposals will be evaluated based on how well the proposed project addresses the core element (s) and activities under a core element that the applicant's project focuses on. (10 points)</p>
2) Regional Priority Areas (5 points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on how well the proposed project supports one or more of the Regional Priorities identified in Section I.C.2., REGIONAL PRIORITY AREAS of this announcement.
3) Environmental Results: Outputs, Outcomes, and Tracking (25 points)	<p>A. Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on how well the proposal demonstrates each of following: (25 points)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Description of the outputs (products) expected to be achieved by the project. (7.5 points) 2. Description of the outcomes (objectives) expected to be achieved by the project. How will the project's products be used past the end of the grant period (outcome)? (i.e. How likely is it that the project will increase protection of wetland resources or increase knowledge of an applicant's wetland resources?) (7.5 points) 3. Extent to which the applicant demonstrates that their proposed project's objectives/outcomes are related to the EPA Strategic Plan Goal of achieving a net increase in wetland acres with a focus on assessment of wetland condition. (5 points) <p>B. Tracking Outputs and Outcomes: Applicants will be evaluated based on how well their proposal demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking their progress toward achieving the expected</p>

	project outputs and outcomes including those identified in Section I. of the RFP. (5 points)
4) Project Tasks/Milestone Schedule/Detailed Budget Narrative (25 points)	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. A clear description of project tasks and associated products and whether the applicant's approach (methodology) or the steps that will be used to develop a project methodology/approach to carrying out the tasks and producing the products is sound. (15 points) B. A clearly articulated milestone schedule that shows a breakout of the project into phases by associated task and a timeline for completion of the tasks including the anticipated dates for the start and completion of each task. (5 points) C. The adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable including whether: the applicant identified the requested federal dollars, the required cost share/match and the total project cost for each component/task for each budget item from Form 424A; the applicant explained if and how non-federal partners will provide cost share/match and demonstrated the cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of costs and the value of in-kind contributions. (5 points)
5) Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/Qualifications (10 points)	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully manage and complete the proposed project taking into account the applicant's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Organizational experience related to the proposed project, and the organization's readiness and ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (5 points) B. Staff experience/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (5 points)
6) Partnerships (5 points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on how well the applicant has demonstrated appropriate and necessary partnerships to successfully conduct the project including whether they have provided a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks, and how these partnerships will contribute to building their state/tribal/local government wetland program. (5 points)
7) Transfer of Results (5 points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on how well the proposal demonstrates the applicant's plan for <u>active</u> transfer of project results and/or methods to other state, tribe or local agencies within and beyond their own organization, so that the others can better build their wetland protection programs. (5 points)
8) Past Performance (10 points)	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within

	<p>the last three years (no more than five agreements and preferably EPA agreements). (4 points)</p> <p>B. History of meeting reporting requirements under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under these agreements. (3 points)</p> <p>C. History of whether they documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (<i>e.g.</i>, outcomes and outputs) under federally and/or non-federally assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) performed within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (3 points)</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under A, B, and C above, EPA will consider the information supplied by the applicant in its proposal, and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files (<i>e.g.</i>, Grantee Compliance Database) and prior/current grantors (<i>e.g.</i>, to verify and/or supplement the information provided the by applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance information will receive a neutral score for these factors (<i>i.e.</i>, two points for subcriterion A and one and a half points for subcriteria B and/or C). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in your proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for these factors.</p>
--	--

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All proposals received by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel of EPA staff will review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A above, assign scores to each proposal, and develop a list of the most highly rated proposals to submit to the Selection Official. Final funding decisions will then be made by the Selection Official based on the evaluation conducted by the review panel and may also take into account the following factors:

1. Geographic distribution of funds;
2. Diversity of projects (this includes type of project and type of applicant); and
3. Availability of funds.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

All applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified by e-mail. A final application will be requested from eligible applicants whose proposal has been preliminarily

selected for award. The applicant will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package. This letter is not an authorization to begin performance.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy, including EPA's Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1). An approvable final workplan narrative is required to include:

1. Workplan components to be funded under the assistance agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each workplan component;
3. Workplan commitments for each workplan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule in accordance with 40 CFR §35.115;
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the workplan commitments; and
6. Grant awardees will be expected to provide to EPA project location information for any grant-funded project. The type of locational information (statewide, 8-digit hydrologic unit code, 12-digit hydrologic unit code, county, municipality, tribal land boundary, local wetland with borders defined by lat/long points, etc.) will be determined by consultation with EPA, and will be determined based on the geographic scale and intent of the project.
7. In consultation with EPA, grant awardees will be expected to provide to EPA a breakdown of federal funds that will be spent by "project category" (i.e. the type of activity(s) that is being conducted). Project Categories can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantpcd.html>

In addition, successful applicants and their partners will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR Part 32.

A list of the successful proposals will be posted at EPA's Wetland Grant Database (<http://iaspub.epa.gov/pls/grts/f?p=101:1>). Additional information about this announcement, including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications, can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/initiative/#financial> and www.grants.gov.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The general award and administration process for all Wetland Program Development Grants is governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations"), 40 CFR Part 31 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments") and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A ("Environmental Program Grants for State, Interstate, and Local Government Agencies") and Subpart B ("Environmental Program Grants for Tribes"). These regulations can be found at http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?sid=07e813f6ea9030a2e568d51be65e3788&c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title40/40cfrv1_02.tpl.

C. REPORTING

These regulations specify basic grant reporting requirements; including performance and financial reports (see 40 CFR 30.51, 30.52, 31.40, 31.41, 35.115, and 35.515). In negotiating these grants, EPA will work closely with recipients to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements into each grant agreement consistent with 40 CFR 30.51, 31.40, 35.115,

and 35.515. These regulations provide some flexibility in determining the appropriate content and frequency of performance reports. At a minimum, however, the reporting schedule must require the recipient to report at least annually. Award recipients will be required to submit the final report electronically and in hard copy and should include, in addition, a 1-2 page project summary.

D. DISPUTE PROCEDURES

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies may also be requested by contacting the Agency contact in Section VII., AGENCY CONTACTS.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Morgan Jackson
Wetlands, Coastal and Oceans Branch
US EPA, Region 4
61 Forsyth Street
AFC-15th
404-562-9393
Jackson.morgan@epa.gov
Region 4 – Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, North and South Carolina and Tennessee.

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC) and STORET

Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements are applicable to these grants (see 40 CFR 30.54 and 40 CFR 31.45). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. Contact the Regional Office Wetland Grant Coordinator (See Section VII., AGENCY CONTACTS for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

Additionally, recipients of grants for wetland monitoring projects will be encouraged to submit all data from monitoring to STORET (short for STOrage and RETrieval) database. STORET provides an accessible, nationwide central repository of water information of known quality. Grantee submission of monitoring data into STORET or monitoring data made available in the Advisory Council for Water Information (ACWI) Core Monitoring Data Element Standard (or Data Exchange Template) will facilitate exchange of monitoring data between EPA and its partners. Information on STORET is at <http://www.epa.gov/storet/> and information on the standard is at <http://www.epa.gov/edr>.

B. DATA SHARING

All recipients of these assistance agreements will be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final workplan. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-110 has been revised to provide public access to research data through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) under some circumstances. Data that are (1) first produced in a project that is supported in whole or in part with Federal funds and (2) cited publicly and officially by a Federal agency in support of an action that has the force and effect of law (i.e., a regulation) may be accessed through FOIA. If such data are requested by the public, the EPA must ask for it, and the grantee must submit it, in accordance with A-110 and EPA regulations at 40 CFR 30.36.

C. COPYRIGHTS

EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes in accordance with 40 CFR 31.34: (a) the copyright in any work developed under a grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant; and (b) any rights of copyright to which a grantee, subgrantee or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support.

D. INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL

Pursuant to Executive Order 13112 (<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/>), the recipient of EPA funds and all subcontractors shall monitor the project to ensure it does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. If invasive species are detected or populations promoted in any way, the recipient will respond rapidly to control populations in an environmentally sound manner, as approved by the EPA Project Officer.

E. EXCHANGE NETWORK

EPA, States, Territories, and Tribes are working together to develop the National Environmental Information Exchange Network. This data sharing network is a secure, internet- and standards-based way to support electronic data reporting, sharing, and integration of both regulatory and non-regulatory environmental data. The Water Quality Exchange (WQX) is an Exchange Network based framework by which EPA compiles water quality monitoring data into the STORET Warehouse. EPA's presence on the Exchange Network is represented by CDX which authenticates users and validates data submitted through WQX.